

Spike in cases pushes learning online

The rapid rise in COVID-19 cases has led to revised health orders across New Mexico. Stores have either reduced capacity or closed to the general public. Dine-in is no longer an option at restaurants. And schools are starting to feel the impact, too.

The Gallup-McKinley County Schools Board of Education realized this, as they held a special meeting on Nov. 20 in which they motioned to suspend a hybrid of limited in-person learning and online learning, and opt for an all-online learning platform for district elementary schools starting on Nov. 30 until at least Jan. 4.

Dist. 3 Board Member Priscilla Manuelito said the board would be receiving emails and letters from parents and families of GMCS students in lieu of in-person comments. She said the Navajo Nation President has been wanting to meet with the district on hybrid learning, but he has not agreed to participate in a meeting to date.

Manuelito said she wanted district Superintendent Mike Hyatt and Board President Charles Long to provide the number of positive cases in the schools.

“I wish we would have more time to discuss some of these things, especially since we’re moving in this direction,” she said. “I know it’s for the safety of our children, but it seems like we’re rushing through this meeting. We do have to have just cause or some cause and show why we’re moving in this direction.”

Long did say the board has just cause for moving in this direction, but did not comment further.

Dist. 1 Board Member Kevin Mitchell thanked the board for taking action for the safety of their students and said he hopes circumstances improve by December so they can welcome students back in January.

The motion to suspend hybrid learning for elementary schools across GMCS was approved with a 5-0 vote.

By Cody Begaye
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